

REMARKS

Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

Entry of the above amendments is courteously requested in order to place all claims in this application in allowable condition and/or to place the non-allowed claims in better condition for consideration on appeal.

Claim 23 remains in this application. Claims 1 through 22 have been cancelled. No claim stand withdrawn. No claims have been added.

The Examiner's rejections will be considered in the order of their occurrence in the Office Action.

Paragraphs 4 and 5 of the Office Action

Claims 1 through 9, 11, 12 and 19 through 23 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 (first paragraph) as containing subject matter which was not described in the specification in such a way as to enable one skilled in the art to make and/or use the invention.

Claim 23, which now includes the requirements of claim 1, has been changed from "said sliding members of said plurality of sliding members" to "said sliding members".

Claim 23 recites "wherein said plurality of sliding members includes a first set of sliding members and a second set of sliding members". It is submitted that from this recitation that the plurality of sliding members is inclusive of the first set of sliding members and the second set of sliding members. The rejection refers to "a set of sliding members", but such a recitation cannot be found in the claims. The relevance of that language thus cannot be determined since it does not appear in the claims.

Claim 23 has been amended to recite "wherein *at least two* of the sliding members have a perimeter formed of approximately four segments"

and “wherein *said at least two* of the sliding members have four corner junctures where adjacent ones of the arcuate segments meet”.

Withdrawal of the §112 (first paragraph) rejection of claim 23 is respectfully requested.

Paragraph 5 through 18 of the Office Action

Claims 1 through 3 and 9 through 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Rickenbacher.

Claims 1 through 4 and 20 through 22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as being anticipated by Eckert.

Claim 4 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rickenbacher in view of Eckert.

Claims 5 and 6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rickenbacher in view of Alley.

Claims 7 through 9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rickenbacher in view of Ziff.

Claims 11 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rickenbacher in view of Field.

Claim 23 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Rickenbacher in view of Eckert, further in view of Alley, further in view of Ziff and further in view of Field.

Claims 5 and 6 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eckert in view of Alley.

Claims 7 through 9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eckert in view of Ziff.

Claims 11 and 12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eckert in view of Field.

Claim 23 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. Section 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eckert, in view of Alley, further in view of Ziff and further in view of Field.

Claim 23 has been amended to include the requirements of claim 1, from which it originally depended, and therefore claim 23 as amended does not include any new requirements and does not require further searching. More specifically, claim 23 requires that "said second set of sliding members are positioned on outer portions of said lower face of said sheet of material such that the sliding members of said second set surround the sliding members of said first set" (emphasis added).

It appears to be argued in the rejections of the Office Action that the selected ribs of the Eckert patent disclose the relationship required by claim 23. However, it is submitted that the ribs of the Eckert design patent do not disclosed the required "surround[ing]" relationship between the first and second sets of sliding members, particularly as the ribs are designated in the drawings included in the Office Action. In fact, close inspection of Figure 4 of the drawing of Eckert shows that the areas designated in the Office Action as the "first set of sliding members" do not protrude from the bottom of the sled of Eckert, and only the ribs alleged to comprise the "second set of sliding members" actually protrude from the surface of the sled. In fact, it is difficult to see how one of ordinary skill in the art would even distinguish the areas or regions on the Eckert sled that have been indicated as being the "first set of sliding members" to be distinguishable from the rest of the bottom of the sled, due to this non-protruding relationship.

Even if one were to accept for the sake of argument that the areas indicated on the Eckert sled are first and second sets of "sliding members",

Appln. No. 10/719,245
Amendment dated June 20, 2007
Reply to Office Action mailed February 22, 2007

one of ordinary skill in the art would not recognize that the areas of the second set "surround" the areas of the first set, as the first areas extend beyond the second areas in Eckert.

It is submitted that the Eckert, Alley, Ziff, and Field patents would not lead one of ordinary skill in the art to the applicant's claimed invention as defined in claim 23, especially with the requirements set forth above, and therefore it is submitted that claim 23 is allowable over the prior art.

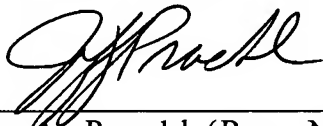
Withdrawal of the §102(b), §102(e) and §103(a) rejections of claim 23 is therefore respectfully requested.

CONCLUSION

In light of the foregoing amendments and remarks, early reconsideration and allowance of this application are most courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: JUNE 20, 2007